

and to exploit the unoccupied montane niche. This would have enabled the species to spread westward rapidly and without further differentiation.

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We dedicate this paper to the memory of the late Dr. Karl, F. Koopman, whose paper on *Myzomela* provided many insights into relationships within this fascinating genus.

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## On the status of the Barred Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes certhia* in the Yucatan Peninsula

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The Barred Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes certhia* is one of the largest members of the family Dendrocolaptidae. As traditionally understood, it has a wide distribution in the Neotropics, from southern Mexico to Brazil, and is highly polytypic, with 12 subspecies admitted by Peters (1951). Marantz (1997) favoured splitting off the populations north of Amazonia as a separate species, *D. sanctithomae*, a move also favoured by S. N. G. Howell (in litt.). I have not reviewed the evidence for this split, and will use the name *D. certhia* in this paper for convenience, as not only does all of the pre-Marantz literature use that name for the

species, but Marantz (1997) himself does so as well. In this paper I review the taxonomy and distribution of the Barred Woodcreeper in the Yucatán Peninsula. Acronyms for museum collections cited are as follows: CM=Carnegie Museum of Natural History; CU=Cornell University; DMNH=Delaware Museum of Natural History; YPM=Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University.

Most of the Mexican range, south to Nicaragua, is occupied by *D. c. sanctithomae* (Lafresnaye). Paynter (1954) described a new subspecies as *Dendrocolaptes certhia legtersi* based on five YPM specimens from central Quintana Roo, Yucatán Peninsula (four from "Carrillo Puerto" = Felipe Carrillo Puerto, and one from Tabi, localities about 15 km apart). [N.B. The YPM collection holds six, not five specimens of *legtersi*; YPM 15308 (which I have before me), although collected on the same expedition as two of the specimens listed by Paynter (1955), was not listed there]. Subsequent to Paynter's own book on birds of the Yucatán Peninsula (1955), *legtersi* has seldom been mentioned in the literature. In the "Checklist of the Birds of Mexico" (Miller *et al.* 1957), Griscom (compiler for the Dendrocolaptidae) acknowledged in a footnote that Paynter had recently described *legtersi*, but it was not given a full entry as none of the co-editors had examined specimens. Binford (1965), in describing *D. c. sheffleri* from Pacific Oaxaca, mentioned differences from *legtersi*, but did not state what specimens he had seen. In Howell & Webb (1995) an asterisk is applied to the scientific name in the headings of the species accounts if more than one subspecies is found within the area covered by the book. Within the species account, the subspecific names are normally not specified unless the subspecies are field-identifiable. The asterisk at the account of *Dendrocolaptes certhia* is attributable to the well-marked *D. c. sheffleri* of Pacific Oaxaca and Guerrero (Howell, in litt.). Finally, *legtersi* is discussed by Marantz (1997).

Although several bird species are represented on the Yucatán Peninsula by more than one subspecies, their ranges are normally associated with the major vegetation zones (see map in Paynter 1955); for example, several subspecies are confined to the narrow zone of coastal scrub in northern Yucatán. It would seem unlikely on the face of it for subspecific differentiation to have taken place in a small area in the middle of the essentially uniform Rain Forest Zone. No previous author seems to have dealt with this point.

Marantz (1997) examined four specimens (clearly from the type series) of *legtersi*, and commented that the "pale, nearly gray . . . underparts of the four *legtersi* specimens made them easily distinguishable from all of the *sanctithomae* with which they were compared." He believed that this pale colour "is not an artifact of feather wear." I examined these birds as long ago as 1971; my notes taken at that time state "Supposed pallor of *legtersi* is due to type series being mostly worn and bleached." With the series now before me, this conclusion is verified. A fresh-plumaged topotype (CM 142191, 6.5 km S Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Q.R., 31 January 1965) matches specimens of *sanctithomae* taken at the tip (Tizimin, Yucatán) and base (Belize) of the peninsula. Furthermore, two badly worn June specimens from

northwestern Honduras, just over the border from the type locality of *sanctithomae* (Santo Tomas, Guatemala; see Todd 1950, Monroe 1968), differ from three February and March specimens just as do the worn versus fresh specimens of *legtersi*. An April Honduras specimen is slightly paler than the February and March birds. Of the two worn Honduras specimens, one (CM 133402, 7 June) matches well the worn paratypes of *legtersi*, and the other (CM 134213, 28 June) is even paler than any specimen of *legtersi* seen. These comparisons indicate that the alleged characters of *legtersi* are indeed an artifact of wear and fading.

Paynter (1955) stated "Although Carrillo Puerto is the northernmost range of the species on the Peninsula, I have little doubt that in time it will be found in the rain forest of northern Quintana Roo." This prediction was fulfilled by the collection of two specimens (CM 142042, DMNH 34872) at "La Vega," 2.5 km W and 11 km S of Puerto Juarez, northeasternmost Quintana Roo [N.B. La Vega was described by Goldman (1951) as a village, visited by Nelson and Goldman in March 1901. It appears on no modern map except that of Paynter (1955), who undoubtedly copied the locality from the map in Goldman (1951). In January 1965, our collecting expedition came across "La Vega" by pure chance. We entered an old dirt road leading off the main road south of Puerto Juarez, and shortly came across a large elaborate gate, at the top of which was the inscription "La Vega"—it was clearly a substantial ranch, long abandoned, rather than a true village.] Marantz (1997) saw one of these two La Vega specimens (DMNH 34872), and stated that it "matched perfectly *D. sanctithomae* collected near Chetumal [southernmost Quintana Roo]." He went on to say that "this specimen, *if labelled correctly* [*italics mine*], indicates that even if *D. c. legtersi* is considered valid, its range must be restricted to the immediate vicinity of the type locality in the east-central portion of the peninsula"; he did not comment on the unlikelihood of such a distribution. As for the correctness of the label data, I can assure Marantz that they are accurate, as I was a member of the expedition that collected the two La Vega specimens!

Another range extension is documented by CM 142137 and CU 35084, collected on 27 January 1965 19 km N of Tizimin, Yucatán. This locality is well within the Deciduous Forest Zone, rather than the Rain Forest Zone, as mapped by Paynter (1955). Map 4 of Marantz (1997) purportedly shows the distribution of the Central American *Dendrocolaptes certhia* based on Peters (1951). Peters, however, did not indicate the extent of the species' range on the Yucatán Peninsula; it is obvious that it occurs much farther north and northeast than mapped by Marantz. The distribution map for *D. certhia* in Howell & Webb (1995) will likewise have to be adjusted somewhat. Another omission in the latter map is Pacific Chiapas; I have seen two specimens from 6 km E of Pijijiapan (DMNH 25114, 25115) taken 23 November 1964 and 26 November 1963 respectively. They are typical of *D. c. sanctithomae* and show no approach to *sheffleri* of Pacific Oaxaca and Guerrero. I have found no consistent differences among *sanctithomae* from Honduras north through Belize, the Yucatán Peninsula, and Chiapas to the limit of the species range in Veracruz.



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### Specimens examined

MEXICO: Veracruz 5, Oaxaca 4, Chiapas 6, Campeche 3, Yucatán 2, Quintana Roo, 9. BELIZE: 10. HONDURAS: 6.  
N.B. In a preliminary version of this study made in the early 1970's I came to the same conclusions about the validity of "*legtersi*"; specimens examined at that time included the CM and YPM skins listed above, plus 8 more from Campeche (University of Michigan 6, U.S. National Museum 2) and 1 from Tabasco (Louisiana State University).

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## Rediscovery of the Cape Verde Cane Warbler *Acrocephalus brevipennis* on São Nicolau in February 1998

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The Cape Verde Cane Warbler *Acrocephalus brevipennis* is endemic to the Cape Verde Islands. It belongs to a clade of reed warblers distributed in the Afrotropics and on Atlantic and Indian Ocean islands